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DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL ART

THE ACCESSIONS OF 1910

III. SCULPTURES, BRONZES, AND
TERRA COTTAS¹

OF the sculptures acquired last year two important pieces—the large Greek head of a goddess and the Roman Sarcophagus with the Contest of Sirens and Muses—have already been described (see *BULLETIN*, December, 1910, p. 276 ff.). Among the remaining sculptures there are several which require a detailed description. The most important is a Roman portrait bust of excellent workmanship (fig. 1). Height, 24 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (62.5 cm.). The shape of the bust, which includes the shoulders and the pectoral line, places it in the Flavian period (69–96 B.C.). It therefore belongs to that small, but highly interesting group which includes some of the masterpieces of Roman portraiture.² The Museum already possesses an example of that period in the bust of the old man described in the *BULLETIN* for April, 1909, p. 65, fig. 6, where it was erroneously assigned to the Republican period. The newly acquired piece represents a middle-aged man of forceful character and keen intellect. His strong personality is indicated by the square jaw and firm yet sensitive mouth, but the troubled look in the eyes and the wrinkled forehead suggest a somewhat morose nature. He is clean-shaven and has slightly curly hair, brushed forward over the forehead and lying flat on the skull, where the individual curls are represented as radiating from the crown. The head is turned slightly to the right and is beautifully poised, which lends

it an air of distinction. The modeling is firm and smooth, there being no abrupt transitions from one plane to another. This quality of the modeling, as well as the sharply cut furrows on the brow, the simple treatment of the hair, and the beautiful polish of the marble, are characteristic features of the period. But the most important quality which this bust possesses, in common with the other great Flavian portraits, is the simple yet subtle characterization of the man. The sculptor has grasped the personality of his sitter with keen understanding and has reproduced it in a straightforward manner without paying regard to small, irrelevant details or striving for dramatic effect. The result is a lifelike portrait and a fine work of art. The bust is in a splendid state of preservation, only the left ear and the end of the nose being restored. The marble has a rich yellow tone, but there are root stains on the right side.

Of great interest also is the Roman pilaster with floral design, which gives us an example of another field in which the Romans achieved greatness—that of decorative art. The design, which is inclosed on each side by an ornamental border, consists of a cluster of acanthus leaves at the base, from which rise foliated scrolls ending variously in rosettes or leaves with acanthus blossoms. Besides these main scrolls, separate little tendrils and flowers issue at various points, while birds of different kinds, a lizard, and an Eros are introduced in the background. The whole forms a composition of great beauty; the main design stands out clearly, while the numerous other motives add to the richness of the effect. Moreover, the various leaves and flowers and the flying or perching birds are so wonderfully true to nature that they give us a feeling of real out-of-door life. In style this pilaster is closely allied to the decorative pieces from the Ara Pacis of Augustus. A careful comparison of the two, however, seems to indicate that our pilaster can hardly belong to the same monument, for it lacks that crispness and extreme delicacy of execution for which the pieces from the Ara Pacis are distinguished. It must therefore belong, as Mr. John

¹ In the *BULLETIN* for December, 1910, p. 275, were enumerated the accessions made in the Classical Department during that year, with the exception of a few objects which had not then arrived. The latter, consisting of a Roman marble portrait bust, two bronze reliefs, and a Greek bronze statuette, have since been received. The bronze statuette is not yet ready for exhibition, but the rest have been placed with the other 1910 accessions in Gallery 10 and are described in the present article.

² For a list of Flavian portraits cf. J. W. Crowfoot, *Some Portraits of the Flavian Age*, in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, XX, p. 31.

Marshall informs us, to another series, of which six other pieces are known—two in the Uffizi (see Dütschke, *Antike Bildwerke in Oberitalien*, III, Nos. 28 and 30) and four in the Villa Medici (see Matz-Duhn, *Antike Bildwerke in Rom*, III, No. 3459)—all of which probably formed part of a somewhat later building in which the style

wound round her left arm. The head was made in a separate piece and inserted. In style it is similar to the Themis of Khaires-tratos from Rhamnous. It likewise belongs to the Attic school of the early third century B.C., a period when the sculptors of this school had lost their originality of conception and repeated the types created

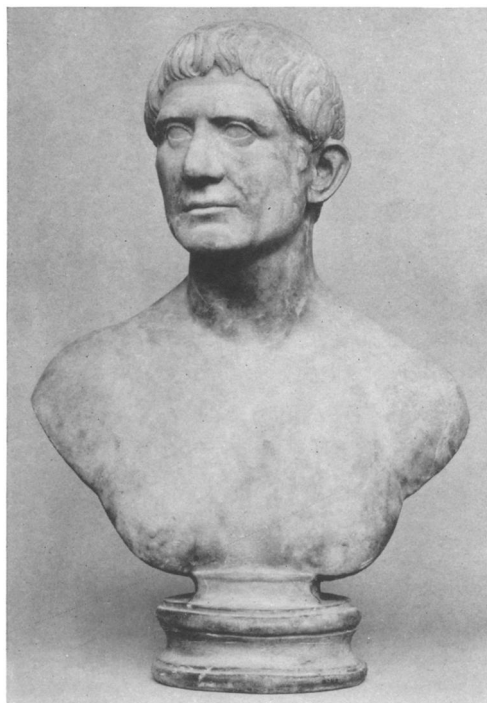


FIG. 1. ROMAN PORTRAIT BUST
FIRST CENTURY A.D.

of the decorations was distinctly influenced by the Ara Pacis. Our pilaster, which is 11 ft. 6 in. (3.46 m.) high and 2 ft. 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (72 cm.) wide, has been put together from several fragments, the missing portions being restored in cement. It formerly belonged to the Ferroni Collection.

An imposing piece, of good preservation but rather commonplace execution, is a female statue over life-size (total height 6 feet 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (1.92 m.), of Greek workmanship (fig. 2). She wears a sleeveless chiton, girt above the waist, and a himation which passes over her left shoulder and is

during the previous century, executing them in a facile but somewhat stereotyped manner. In the absence of attributes (both forearms are missing), the identification of the statue is not possible. Perhaps it represents a young goddess, or it may have served as a grave figure.

Of late Greek or Roman workmanship is a dead goat, which is lying on a slab with its legs tied together (fig. 6). The representation of the helpless little body with its drooping head and sunken eyes is wonderfully true to nature, while the modeling throughout and the rendering of the shaggy

hair show the sculptor's intimate knowledge of the subject. The ears and parts of the horns are missing and have been restored in plaster. Goats were used a great deal for sacrificial purposes; it is probable, therefore, that we have here a votive offering to some deity. For another admirable representation of a dead animal, probably of the same period, the marble figure of a ram in the Vatican (Helbig, Führer, No. 167) should be compared.

Another acquisition of importance is the fragment from a replica of the well-known relief of Aphrodite persuading Helen to join Paris (fig. 3), of which the original probably belonged to the middle of the fourth century B.C. Our fragment shows only the charming little figure of Peitho (Persuasion) sitting on a pillar in a pensive attitude and looking down on the scene below. From the other copies of this relief we know that directly beneath the pillar were seated Aphrodite and Helen, while opposite them stood Paris with Eros. The best-known example of this relief

is in the Museum of Naples (published in Museo Borbonico III, pl. XL). The scene also occurs on a puteal at Marbury Hall, England, popularly known as the Jenkins Vase (see Michaelis, *Ancient Marbles in Great Britain*, p. 511); and again on a marble vase from Rome (see Bullettino

della commissione archeologica comunale di Roma, VIII, pl. 6-8, pp. 119 ff.). On both these vases the figure of Peitho on the pillar is absent, and instead of it three Muses are introduced. The Peitho of our relief agrees in all details with the corre-

sponding figure in the Naples relief.

Among the bronzes special mention must be made of two beautiful reliefs of Greek workmanship. One belongs to the archaic period and represents Boreas, the personification of the North Wind, flying (fig. 5); height $4\frac{5}{8}$ in. (11.7 cm.). He is kneeling on one knee, which is the characteristic attitude of early representations of swift motion. He wears a short chiton of peculiar shape, consisting of a tight-fitting jacket with skirt and short sleeves, ornamented with borders of zigzag lines; also winged shoes and a cap. The muscles of the arms and legs have been unduly accentuated and the modeling of the features is primitive. Moreover, as is usual in works of this period, the upper part of the body is represented in full front,

while the lower is in profile, the dividing line being formed sharply at the waist with no attempt at gradual transition. The composition, however, is spirited and in spite of its limitations conveys the idea of lively movement successfully.

The other relief belongs to the end of the



FIG. 2. GREEK FEMALE STATUE
III CENTURY B.C.

fifth century B.C. and represents the contest of a youth and a griffin (fig. 4); diameter $3\frac{5}{8}$ in. (9.2 cm.). The griffin is grappling the youth with both forepaws and is digging its claws into his flesh, while biting his shoulder with its beak. The youth is trying to defend himself by thrusting his sword (now missing) into the griffin's breast. Both figures are beautifully modeled, the strain of the combat being admirably represented in the tenseness of the muscles. The composition is skillfully designed to fill the round space allotted to it. According to the legend, the griffins dwelt near the extreme North where they guarded gold treasures, which the Arimaspians, a race of one-eyed monsters, tried to secure from them (see Herodotus 3, 116; 4, 13). In Greek art contests of griffins and Arimaspians are often represented, the latter being depicted, however, not as one-eyed monsters, but merely as barbarians. Rarely, as in this relief, the Arimaspians appear as a nude youth. The ornament which is decorated with this relief is shaped like a knob with a flat top, the under side, which consists of three superimposed layers, being concave and ending in a large, round hole, evidently for the insertion of a rod. Its use is uncertain; it may have served as the top knob of the leg of a chair or couch. The piece has been known for some time; it formed part of the Barberini Collection and is published in the *Monumenti dell' Istituto*

archeologico Vol. IX, pl. XXXI, No. 3 and *Annali*, 1871, p. 142.

Of special interest to students will be a collection of 129 miscellaneous terra cottas from Tarentum, of which about half are at present placed on exhibition. Like most Tarentine terra cottas, they are nearly all

in a fragmentary condition. A large number of them seem to have formed part of the familiar "funeral feast" group, consisting of a man reclining on a couch accompanied by a seated female figure, who often holds a child in her arms. Whether these reliefs represent the heroized dead receiving offerings, which is the usual subject of such groups, or in this instance stand for the mystic union of the chthonic Dionysos with Persephone-Kora, the infant being Iacchos (as has been held by A. J. Evans, see *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1886, p. 10), it is difficult to determine. The elaborate head-dress worn in most instances by the male figure should be noted. If he indeed represents the deceased, this may reflect a custom of Tarentine burials. The use of these reliefs, which have been found in enormous quantities



FIG. 3. PEITHO (PERSUASION)
FRAGMENT FROM A RELIEF

of varying sizes, is uncertain; it is possible that they served as ornaments of the tomb. Figures of warriors and horsemen, of which our collection includes a few examples, can be explained as representing the deceased under another aspect. But there are many pieces, particularly heads, worked in the round, which cannot be identified. A num-

ber of antefixes, representing Medusa Herakles, and Io, belong to various periods. Noteworthy are also several perforated disks with reliefs representing Eros, Leda and the swan, an owl, etc., while one is in-

were used as weights it is curious that the holes show no traces of friction. Lastly, there should be mentioned a mould of circular shape (only half is preserved) stamped with various devices, such as the thunder-



FIG. 4. CONTEST OF A YOUTH AND A GRIFFIN
END OF V CENTURY B.C.



FIG. 5. BOREAS, FLYING
VI CENTURY B.C.

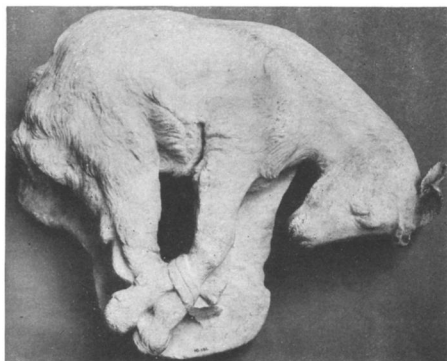


FIG. 6. DEAD GOAT
LATE GREEK OR ROMAN

scribed *συμμη*. These disks are somewhat puzzling. The fact that a few have been found inscribed *ἡμιβόλιον* has been taken to show that they were used to weigh out half an obol's worth of some commodity. But it has been pointed out that if these disks

bolt of Zeus, an amphora, an open palm, a ladder, and a lamb. The most probable explanation of this and similar examples is that they served for stamping sacred cakes.

G. M. A. R.